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James Ayer  
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**JAMES AYER**

**IN MEMORIAM**

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**BORN OCTOBER 4, 1815**

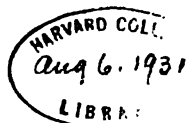
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## PREFACE.

The preparation of this Memorial Sketch has been a labor of filial love. It was suggested by notes which my father wrote some years ago, and left addressed to me. From this source I have freely drawn.

Much has been written regarding the genealogy of the four families, Ayer, Ayres, Mason and Bourne,—only an outline of which is given here.

I owe much to the kindness of many friends who have aided in making the statements as accurate as possible, and, in addition to those elsewhere mentioned, am especially indebted to Miss Ellen C. Ayer, Mrs. E. Corinna Wheeler, Miss A. Lucy Bourne, and to Mr. Monroe Ayer for information regarding the family history; to Honorable William H. Clifford and Messrs.

William H. Whitmore, Charles F. Mason, Walter K. Watkins and Stephen C. Sharples for much genealogical data, only a small portion of which, stated concisely, appears in these pages; to Honorable William F. Wharton for aid in historical research; to Doctors Samuel A. Green, J. Collins Warren, Edwin H. Brigham and Herbert L. Burrell for many important facts and very valuable suggestions; and to the Reverend Doctors Cyrus Hamlin and Samuel E. Herrick for the friendly interest which prompted the concluding chapters.

JAMES BOURNE AYER.

*Boston, December, 1892.*

## CONTENTS.

	PAGE
Family . . . . .	1
Childhood and School Life . . . . .	8
College Life, 1831-1834 . . . . .	12
Medical Studies, 1834-1839 . . . . .	16
Early Professional Life, 1839-1846 . . . . .	18
Life in Boston, 1846-1860 . . . . .	23
Life in Boston, 1860-1877 . . . . .	30
Life in Boston, 1877-1887 . . . . .	35
Last Years, 1887-1891 . . . . .	40
Resolutions of The Boston Society for Med- ical Improvement . . . . .	45
Reminiscences of College and Professional Life, by Reverend Cyrus Hamlin, D.D., LL.D. . . . .	47
Funeral Address, by Reverend Samuel E. Herrick, D.D. . . . .	54



## ILLUSTRATIONS.

- James Ayer in his fifty-ninth year, with auto-  
graph, *Frontispiece*
- Parents of James Ayer, from portraits painted  
in 1825 by Brewster, *Facing page 2*
- Homestead, Newfield, Maine, *Facing page 6*
- Newfield and Neighborhood,  
*Between pages 10 and 11*
- Meeting-house and Burial-ground, New-  
field, Maine, *Facing page 14*
- Martha Bourne Ayer and Son, from a  
daguerreotype, taken in 1851, *Facing page 26*
- James Ayer, at age of thirty-nine, from a  
portrait by Adna Tenney, *Facing page 28*





## FAMILY.

Dr. James Ayer, the subject of this sketch, was born at Newfield, York County, Maine, October 4, 1815. The village, previous to its incorporation by the Massachusetts Legislature in 1794, had been known as the Washington Plantation. It is thirty miles northwest of Portland, bordering on the New Hampshire line, and was divided by the Little Ossipee River from Shapleigh on the south. It adjoins Limerick on the east, and Parsonsfield on the north. The homestead was in the southeasterly corner, the most thickly settled part of the town, which contained in all about twelve hundred inhabitants.

His father, Dr. James Ayer, for whom he was named, was born at Buxton, Maine, September 26, 1781, but at an early age removed to Bethel, where he received his education, and studied medicine with Dr. Timothy Carter, the best-known physician in that vicinity. Dr. Carter was highly esteemed, and had many medical pupils.

Dr. Ayer, senior, on completing his studies in 1805, removed to Newfield, where he began the practice of medicine, and on the seventh of November of the same year married Thirza Mason, of Bethel, New Hampshire.

He continued in the active practice of his profession at Newfield until his death, a period of twenty-nine years.

He traced his descent (being sixth in line) from John Ayer,<sup>1</sup> of Salisbury, a planter first mentioned in 1637, who removed to Haverhill in 1647 where he died ten years later, leaving nine children.

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<sup>1</sup>The following is a more complete statement of the ancestry :

I. JOHN AYER (or EYER) of Salisbury 1637, planter, removed to Ipswich in 1646, and to Haverhill, 1647, where he died March 31, 1657. He married Hannah ——— who died Oct. 8, 1688. They left nine children : John, Nathaniel, Hannah, Rebecca, Mary, Obadiah, Robert, Thomas and PETER. The will was probated at the court held at Hampton, Oct. 6, 1657.

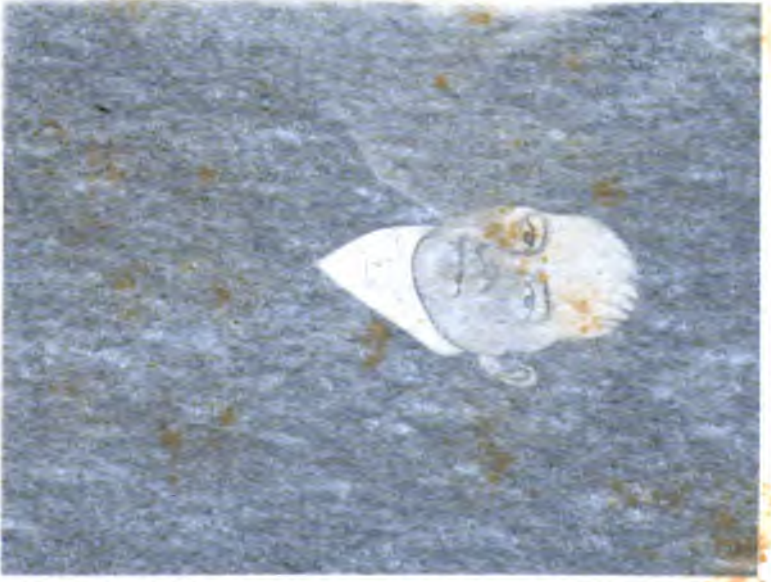
II. PETER AYER, (or EYER) Cornet, of Haverhill, youngest child of JOHN AYER, born 1633 ; married Hannah Allen of Haverhill, Nov. 1, 1659. He was a Freeman in 1666, and a representative in 1683-5-6-9, 1690-5-6 and 8. He died Jan. 2, 1699, leaving nine children : Ruth, Hannah, Abigail, Mary, Martha, SAMUEL, William, Rachel and Ebenezer.

III. SAMUEL AYER, of Haverhill, the Lieutenant, sixth child of PETER, born Sept. 28, 1669, died Jan. 2, 1744. Was rep-

Figure 1  
A. N. 100



Figure 2  
B. N. 100



### *Family.*

Dr. Ayer, after completing his studies in 1805, came to New York where he began the practice of medicine, and in the spring of 1810 married the daughter of the Rev. John May, of Bethel, New York.

He continued in the practice of his profession at New York until his death, a period of twenty-two years.

He traces his descent (being sixth in line) from John Ayer, of Salisbury, a planter first mentioned in 1637, who removed to Haverhill in 1647 where he died ten years later, leaving nine children.

John Ayer, son of John, first of the ancestry:

John Ayer, born 1637, planter, removed to Haverhill in 1647, where he died March 31, 1657. He was married to Mary, who died Oct. 8, 1658. They had nine children, Samuel, Hannah, Rebecca, Mary, Obadiah, John, Joseph, and David. The will was probated at the court in 1657.

Rebecca (or Rebecca), of Haverhill, youngest daughter of John Ayer, married Hannah Allen of Haverhill. He was born in 1645 and a representative of the family. He died in 1690 leaving nine children, Mary, Hannah, Rebecca, Mary, Obadiah, John, Joseph, and David.

Obadiah Ayer, of Haverhill, the Licentiate, sixth child of John Ayer, died Jan. 2, 1744. Was rep-



THIRZA MASON AYER.  
1781-1864.



JAMES AYER, M. D.  
1781-1834.

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John Ayer is mentioned by Mirick as one of the thirty-two landholders of Pentucket, now Haverhill, in 1645. The line descended through Peter, the youngest of the children, a representative from Haverhill for several years, who died January 2, 1699, leaving nine children, the sixth of whom was Samuel, born in 1669, died in 1745. In 1700, according to Mirick, "Nearly one-third of the inhabitants of Haverhill were named Ayer. They were a fearless, athletic race of men and were mostly cultivators of the soil." Ebenezer, born in Haverhill in 1705, died in Salem, New Hampshire, in 1762, was the fifth child of Samuel. His son, Joseph, born in Salem, New Hampshire, May 23, 1746, had six children, Dr. James Ayer, senior, being the fourth.

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representative in 1701. Married Elizabeth Tuttle, Nov. 21, 1693, who died Nov. 29, 1752. They had eight children: Hannah, Peter, Samuel, William, EBENEZER, Elizabeth, Simon, Sarah.

IV. EBENEZER, Lieutenant, born in Haverhill Feb. 18, 1705, fifth child of SAMUEL, married Susanna Kimball Mar. 29, 1726. She was daughter of Robert and Susanna (Atwood) Kimball, of Bradford, Mass.; born March 25, 1707, died Sept. 19, 1749, at Salem, N. H. Lieut. Ebenezer Ayer was prominently mentioned in the Town Records of Salem, New Hampshire, after 1736. Of their children I have the names of five: Ebenezer, Timothy, John, JOSEPH, Isaiah. By his second wife, Elizabeth —, there were four children: William, Elizabeth, Samuel and Phillip. He died at Salem, N. H., March 3, 1762. The widow died there January 2, 1786.

Thirza Mason, his wife, was the daughter of Moses Mason, who was a Revolutionary soldier, probably at the battle of Bunker Hill as a Minute Man, and later serving as one of the "Green Mountain Boys" under Gen. Stark. He was born in Newton, Massachusetts, in 1757, married Eunice Ayres, and removed to Dublin, New Hampshire, in 1780, and to Bethel, Maine, in 1799, representing the latter town in the General Court from 1813 to 1817.

Moses Mason, Jr., was the fifth in line from Captain Hugh Mason, who settled at Watertown, Massachusetts,

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V. JOSEPH, son of EBENEZER and Susanna (Kimball) Ayer, born May 23, 1746, in Salem, N. H., was living in Pearsonstown, (now Standish,) Me., when he married, Oct. 3, 1775, Eunice Clark, (daughter of James Clark,) who was born Aug. 12, 1749. They removed to Buxton, Me., and later to Brownfield and Bethel, and had six children: Mary, Samuel, Jonathan, JAMES, Sarah, Hugh.

VI. James, fourth child of JOSEPH, born in Buxton, Me., Sept. 26, 1781, brought up in Bethel, removed to Newfield in 1805, married Thirza Mason Nov. 7, 1805, died in Newfield Jan. 23, 1834, leaving six children (two died in infancy): Mary A., Eunice, Joseph Cullen, JAMES, Luther, Monroe.

[This statement has been gathered from the following sources: I, II, III and IV generations from original Haverhill records carefully copied by Mr. Alfred Poor. IV generation also from Salem, N. H., records, copied by Mr. James Ayer, of that town, in a very painstaking manner. V and VI generations (principally) from the old family record preserved at the homestead at Newfield, which begins, "Ebenezer Ayer, born March, 1705, died March 3, 1762," correcting some of the data in Lapham's recent History of Bethel, Maine.]



in 1634. Hugh Mason<sup>1</sup> was very prominent in town affairs, was representative for ten years, and died in 1678.

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<sup>1</sup>The following is taken from the carefully compiled manuscript of Mr. Edward Doubleday Harris gleaned from the collections of the late Thaddeus William Harris, M. D., of Cambridge, Mass.

I. CAPTAIN HUGH MASON, born 1606 in England, sailed from Ipswich with his wife, Esther, (born 1610), in the ship Francis, and settled in Watertown, Mass., in 1634. He was a Freeman March 4, 1634-5; selectman many years; deputy to general court ten years; commissioned captain 1653; died Oct. 10, 1678. His widow died May 21, 1692. They had three sons and five daughters.

II. JOHN, fifth child but eldest son of HUGH, born at Watertown Jan. 1, 1644-5, settled at Cambridge Village, (Newton). He was a tanner; constable there in 1679; selectman five years; married Elizabeth, daughter of John and Abigail Hammond (born May 6, 1655, died Nov. 13, 1715). Six children.

III. DANIEL, fourth child of JOHN; born in Newton; husbandman, lived at Lexington, Sudbury and Charlestown. His first wife was Experience Newcomb, who died at Charlestown, Nov. 18, 1733; seven children, MOSES being the sixth. Second wife (married in 1737) was a daughter of Joseph Allen; four children.

IV. MOSES, sixth child of DANIEL; born at Newton Feb. 10, 1728-9; removed to Sherborn, thence to Dublin, N. H.; housewright; married, June 6, 1749, Lydia, daughter of Jesse and Mary Knapp, who died at Bethel, Me., July 2, 1802, aged 73. He died at Dublin Oct. 1, 1775. Ten children.

V. MOSES, JR., fourth child of MOSES, born at Newton April 26, 1757. Married at Brookfield, Mass., June 20, 1780, Eunice, daughter of Wm. and Rachel Ayres, and settled, a farmer, in Dublin, N. H., thence removing to Bethel, Maine; represented the town in the general court 1813-1817. Died at Bethel Oct. 1, 1836. She died

Thirza Mason's mother, Eunice Ayres,<sup>1</sup> was fifth in the line of descent from Captain John Ayres who settled at Ipswich in 1648. It is not known that any relationship existed between the pioneers John Ayer, of

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February 4, 1846, aged 84. Eleven children, THIRZA MASON, born at Dublin July 3, 1781, being the eldest. She married Nov. 7, 1805, JAMES AYER, M.D., of Newfield; died Oct. 17, 1864.

The New Hampshire records mention that Moses Mason was a soldier in Captain Joseph Parker's company, Colonel Enoch Hale's regiment, which joined the Northern army at Ticonderoga, July 18, 1776. In 1777 he enlisted from Dublin, again under Col. Hale. There is a record that he was in service in 1781.

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<sup>1</sup> Ancestry of Eunice Ayres, wife of Moses Mason, from "A Record of the descendants of Captain John Ayres of Brookfield, Mass.," by William H. Whitmore, Esq., Record Commissioner of Boston:

I. CAPTAIN JOHN AYRES, Ipswich, 1648, married Susanna Symonds, daughter of Mark Symonds of Ipswich. He removed to Brookfield November, 1672, and with seven others was killed by Indians, Aug. 3, 1675, in the fight at Brookfield. He left eight children. After his death the family returned to Ipswich.

II. SAMUEL of NEWBURY, second child of JOHN, married, 1677, Abigail Fellows. Ten children.

III. JABEZ of NEWBURY, born Dec. 27, 1690, sixth child of SAMUEL, married Rebecca, daughter of Henry Kimball. Removed to Brookfield in 1721. Seven children.

IV. WILLIAM, LIEUTENANT OF BROOKFIELD, third child of JABEZ, born Feb. 28, 1723-4, married Rachel Barns July 3, 1753. He died Dec. 31, 1814; widow died May 24, 1817. They had fourteen children, the fourth of whom, EUNICE, was born Jan. 24, 1761. She married MOSES MASON.



FRONT STREET, NEWFIELD, MAINE.

### *Family.*

Thirza Mason's mother, Eunice Ayres,<sup>1</sup> was fifth in the line of descent from Captain John Ayres who settled at Dedham in 1648. It is not known that any relations connected between the officers John Ayer, of

February 21, 1740, and his six children, THIRZA MASON, born at Dedham July 3, 1781, being the eldest. She married Nov. 7, 1811, JAMES AYER, M.D., of 1857, died Oct. 17, 1869.

The New Hampshire record mentions that Moser Mason was a soldier in Captain Joseph Parker's company, Colonel Zachariah's regiment, which joined the Northern army at Freetown, Feb. 18, 1775. In 1777 he enlisted from Dublin, again in Parker's regiment. There is a record that he was in service in 1781.

John Ayres, son of the Ayres, with his father, Mason, from "the Kented hills" of Cambridge, in the "Army of Peckfield, Mass.," by the name of John Ayres, Esq., was Commissioner of Boston.

John Ayres, son of the Ayres, Peckfield, 1648, married Susanna Ayres, daughter of John Ayres, of Ipswich. He removed to Brookfield, Mass., where he died. He was killed by the Indians at Brookfield. He left eight children, of whom only one, John, returned to Ipswich.

John Ayres, son of the Ayres, second child of JOHN, married, 1781, Susanna Ayres, daughter of JOHN.

John Ayres, son of the Ayres, born Dec. 27, 1690, sixth child of SAMUEL, son of the Ayres, daughter of Henry Kimball. He removed to Brookfield, Mass., where he died.

IV. JOHN AYRES, OF BROOKFIELD, and his wife, Rachel Ayres, born July 3, 1781, married 1781, Rachel Ayres, widow died May 21, 1817. They had eight children, of whom, EUNICE was born Jan. 21, 1811, daughter of JAMES MASON.



HOMESTEAD, NEWFIELD, MAINE.



Salisbury, and Captain John Ayres, of Ipswich. The best authorities regard the Ayer and Ayres families as distinct. The Ayres family afterward resided at Newbury and Brookfield.

My father had good reason for the affectionate regard in which he held both parents. In after life he often referred to their good examples and to the happy influences of their religious home life.

His father was especially kind and indulgent, ever willing to labor for the support and good of his family, and especially desirous to give his children the best education in his power.

He was a member of the Maine Medical Society, and during his life had several students in medicine. He was an industrious, and successful practitioner, but his income was limited.

He was public spirited and held positions of trust in the county.

Of the six children who lived to grow up my father was the fourth. Two survive him, Luther, who still resides at the homestead, and Monroe, a retired business man in Boston.

## CHILDHOOD AND SCHOOL LIFE.

His childhood was that of a healthy country boy. His earliest school recollections dated back to the opening of the "new school house" in his part of the town. It was unfurnished, and the seats, which were made of planks laid upon short logs, were very uncomfortable for little boys. He never forgot, in after life, how tired he became from sitting, and how long the days appeared. In winter it was the custom to have a school-master, but in summer a school-mistress.

This building served as the meeting-house for his part of the town during his boyhood. There were then no regular religious services on Sunday, but there was occasional preaching by itinerant ministers. His father took an active interest in these services and was in the habit of leading the singing.

At the age of nine years he had a narrow escape from drowning in the Little Ossipee River. He said that at



first there was struggling and suffering, which were less marked in going down the second time, and were succeeded by a dreamy and unconscious state at the time he was rescued by his companions.

Shortly after this event he took his first journey, a trip to Portland. His father drove in a high yellow gig which he used on his professional visits, followed by the chaise containing his mother and himself.

As they crossed the Saco River, they were surprised to find it turbid and enormously swollen. On reaching Portland they learned that this was due to an avalanche in the White Mountains which had destroyed the Willey family, — one of the notable catastrophes of that period. This long anticipated trip was to him a revelation. London, with its four million inhabitants, did not rival in after life the importance of Portland as seen by his young eyes.

On the return from this trip he began his studies with a college course in view.

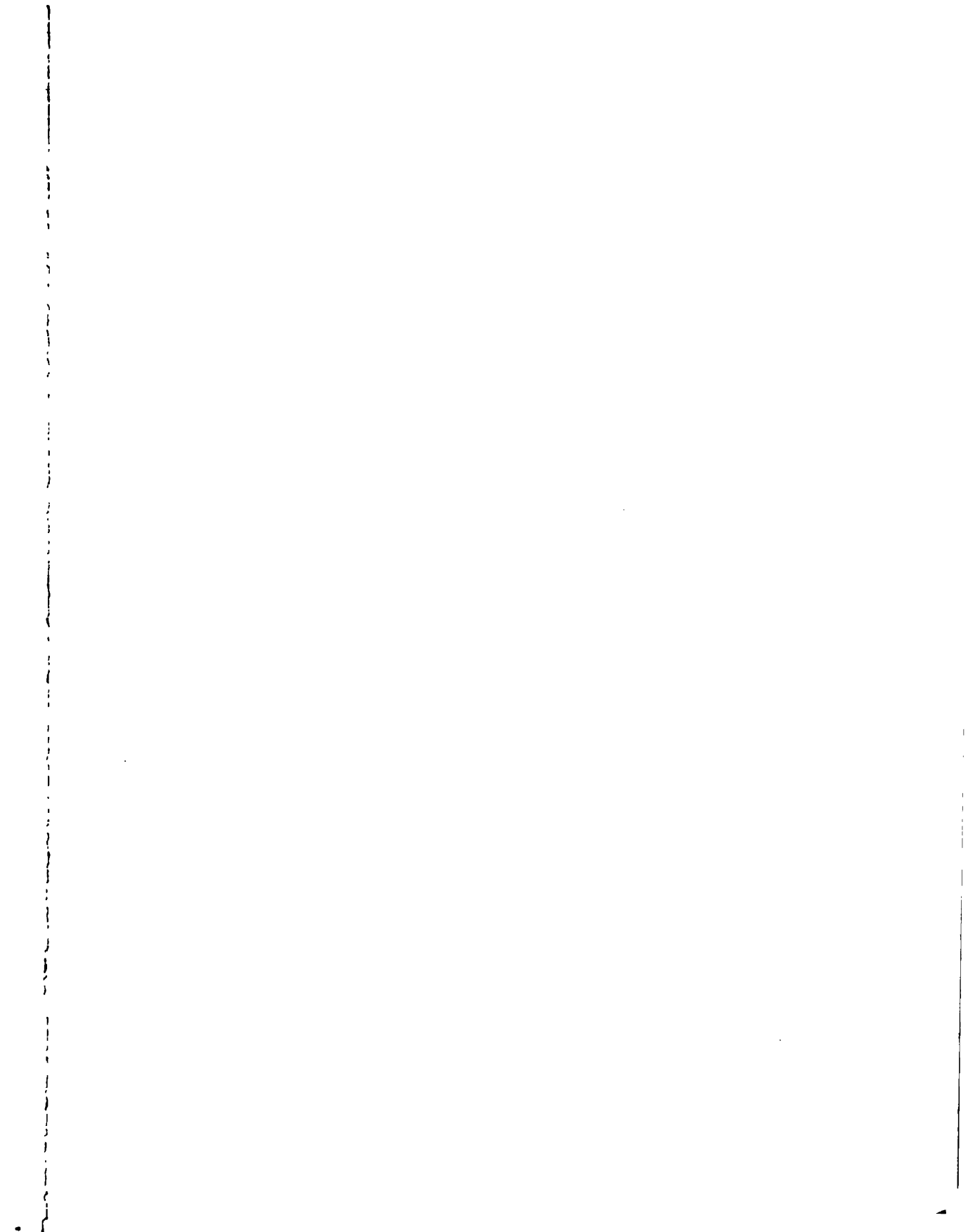
In the summer of 1826 he became a pupil at the well-known Limerick Academy, four miles from home, rooming with his brother Joseph Cullen, who was four years his senior. The brothers returned home every Saturday night to remain with their parents till the evening of Sunday. They boarded at Limerick with Elder Samuel

Burbank, the first editor of *The Morning Star*, a religious paper now published in Boston.

When the fall term closed, he returned home and attended the Newfield district school during the winter. At the same time he studied Latin under the instruction of Hon. Nathan Clifford, late Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States, who had recently come to Newfield to begin the practice of law and occupied a room in his father's house for an office. Shortly afterward Mr. Clifford was elected to the state legislature, and in 1834 became Attorney-General of Maine.

The following summer found him again at Limerick Academy. The preceptor was Mr. Isaac Holton of South Berwick. At that time Daniel R. Goodwin was an advanced scholar and assisted the preceptor, giving evidence, while he was preparing for college, of scholarly attainments which were afterward realized. Later, Asa D. Smith, a recent graduate of Dartmouth College, and afterward its president, became preceptor of the Academy.

All these instructors labored assiduously for the spiritual good as well as for the intellectual progress of their students, and through their influence my father received lasting impressions. Many of his class at an



Limerick.



Dunnell's Hill.

NEWFIELD

Waterboro.

Poverty Pond.  
Road to Lebanon.

Shapleigh.



Homestead. Little Ossipee River.  
Baptist Church. Methodist Church.

.D AND NEIGHBORHOOD.



early age became church members, he himself joining the Congregational church at West Newfield under the pastoral charge of Reverend David P. Smith.

He continued his studies at Limerick Academy in the summer and fall months and at the Newfield school during the winter, until he went to Brunswick in the spring of 1831, and took private lessons with Daniel R. Goodwin who was then a senior and a class-mate of his brother.

By close application to work he was able at Commencement, the second week in September, 1831, to pass the studies required for admission to the Freshman class.

## COLLEGE LIFE.

A vacation of a few weeks followed Commencement. He occupied this time industriously in reviewing the studies of the Freshman year and at the beginning of the fall term he succeeded in passing a successful examination in all the Freshman studies, thus beginning his college course a full-fledged Sophomore.

After his brother's graduation Theodore H. Jewett, of South Berwick, became his chum.

There were thirty-four members of the Bowdoin class of '34, and many of them became men of note. He was particularly intimate with Dr. Jewett up to the time of his death, which occurred September 20, 1878, and with Reverend Dr. Cyrus Hamlin, founder of Robert College, Constantinople, who survives him.

He was one of the youngest of the class, in which he took a fair rank. All the reports which I have seen are worded as follows:— "Rank of James Ayer, satisfactory; attention to studies, good; deportment, correct."



He often referred in after-life to the able scholars composing the faculty of Bowdoin College.

The death of President Packard in 1884 brought out a tribute from the pen of Reverend Cyrus A. Bartol, of the class of 1832, from which I quote a few lines to show the esteem in which the faculty was held :

“ Professor Packard made that impression on me of love and purity which puts me forever in his debt. His is the last to disappear of the forms of the Bowdoin instructors, the memory of all of whom is still to me holy and dear. There was the saintly Upham, whose humility hardly lifted his eyelids or allowed aught but softness in his accents, as he initiated us into the Latin tongue. There was Smyth, earnest, almost impetuous, but candid as the day, cherished in our hearts because his own was so warm. There was Newman, adding to his rhetorical lessons a personal grace. There was Cleaveland, describing the cold minerals, his temperament of genius a flame of fire. There, too, was Longfellow, in his bloom of youth, promise of success and a fame before him, a fortune in this and other lands unsurpassed. They have all entered into rest, peace and joy.”

He assisted in meeting his college expenses by teaching school in the long winter vacation.

At that time certificates were given by the "Superintending School Committee," of a town when an applicant had passed a successful examination for the position of teacher. I find many of these certificates, which he had received, stating that he had the "qualifications to instruct youth in reading and writing the English language grammatically, in arithmetic and in other branches of learning taught in the public schools, as required by the laws of the State of Maine."

In January, 1834, during the winter vacation of his senior year while he was teaching school at West Brunswick, Mr. Caleb R. Ayer came for him in haste from Newfield, when the roads were drifted with deep snow, to inform him of his father's dangerous illness, and to take him home immediately.

After a long day's journey in extremely cold weather he reached home to find his father delirious with epidemic erysipelas, which had been contracted in his practice. He lingered five days, dying January 23, 1834, at the age of fifty-two years, and was buried in the neighboring burial-ground.<sup>1</sup> The new meeting-house, in the building of

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<sup>1</sup>The Burial-ground was first used in 1822. The Meeting-house was built in 1833 by members of different denominations. It is now known as the Free Baptist Church.



MEET THE NEW MAIL

### *College Life.*

After the certificates were given by the "Superintendent of Schools" of a town when an applicant had received their sanction for the position of "qualified teacher," these certificates, which were given only to those that he had the "qualifications for teaching reading and writing the English language, and in arithmetics and in other branches commonly taught in the public schools, as required by law of the State of Maine."

In 1834, during the interval of his senior year, he was teaching school at West Brunswick, Maine. His employer came to him in haste from New Brunswick, the roads being drifted with deep snow, to inform him of his father's late, long illness, and to take him home.

His father died in extremely cold weather, and he was his father delirious with epidemic fever, which he had contracted in his practice. He died on the morning of January 23, 1834, at the age of 41 years. He was buried in the neighboring burial-ground, in the lot of the parsonage, in the building of

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the parsonage, which was burned in 1822. The Meeting-house was built by the members of different denominations. It is now the place of worship of the Baptist Church.



MEETING-HOUSE AND BURIAL-GROUND, NEWFIELD, MAINE.



which he had been especially interested during the last few months of his life, adjoins the burial-ground, but was not dedicated at the time of his death.

The widow continued to reside at the homestead up to the time of her death, October 17, 1864.

My father did not return to take charge of his school after his father's funeral, but began the regular college term in the spring and took his degree of Bachelor of Arts, early in September, 1834.

## MEDICAL STUDIES.

The loss of a good father was a severe shock to him and made a decided change in his plans for the future. Although he began the study of medicine immediately, under the instruction of his father's successor, he had to rely in a great measure upon his own resources, and his medical studies were interrupted during the next three years by the necessity of earning as much as possible by teaching.

During this time he was preceptor of Limerick Academy for one season, and of a private Academy in Wakefield, New Hampshire, a season.

In August, 1837, he took his first course of medical lectures at Dartmouth College, his friend Theodore H. Jewett, who had succeeded him as preceptor of Limerick Academy, rejoining him there and again becoming his room-mate.

The following year he attended his second medical course of lectures, this time at Bowdoin College. He



was appointed assistant librarian under Professor Cleveland, who was librarian as well as professor of chemistry and of materia medica.

Dr. Joseph Roby was professor of anatomy and surgery; Dr. James McKeen, professor of theory and practice of physic, obstetrics and medical jurisprudence.

Shortly after the end of this course, while continuing his studies at home, he was invited by friends living in Centre Lebanon, Maine, to begin practice there, although he was not quite ready to take his medical degree. Centre Lebanon was a farming district with no physician nearer than six miles on the east and four on the west. It was a very healthy community; professional calls were few and fees small. The usual fee for a visit and medicine was fifty cents, and for travel a shilling a mile one way; for venesection twenty-five cents; for tooth extraction thirteen cents. He taught the district school, receiving twenty-two dollars a month and board, and had a few private pupils in the languages at two to three shillings a week.

He was thus enabled to "splice out the income," and saw his way clear, in February, 1839, to return to Bowdoin College for his final course of medical lectures, and at the end of the term, May 14, 1839, he received his degree from the Medical School of Maine.

## EARLY PROFESSIONAL LIFE.

1839 - 1846.

After graduation he returned to Centre Lebanon and continued to practice medicine there for another year. He was appointed postmaster of Centre Lebanon, September 25, 1839. The commission was signed by Amos Kendall, Postmaster-General. At the end of the year the necessity of having a more lucrative field was apparent and, with the utmost friendship on every side, he left May 1, 1840, on horseback for the village of Monument, Massachusetts, now included within the limits of Bourne, but then a part of Sandwich. He tarried in Boston on the way to visit his brother, who was already established in practice, and to provide himself with instruments and a supply of medicine.

In 1840 the regular means of communication between Boston and the Cape were either by stages which went only to Plymouth or by sailing packets twice a week to Sandwich.

He was cordially received in his new home, attending to all the available practice far and near. He made his

professional visits on horse-back, using the same horse he had ridden from Maine, carrying his medicines and instruments in a saddle-bag.

He joined the Massachusetts Medical Society July 1, 1840, and later was chosen secretary of the Barnstable District Medical Society. His first published medical communication which I am able to find is the report in the Boston Medical and Surgical Journal, of a meeting of this society at the court house in Barnstable in May, 1844, when several interesting cases were discussed.

He remained for three years at Monument and then removed to Sandwich where he was benefitted by a larger population, and at the same time was able to retain his practice at Monument.

Shortly after his removal, November 9, 1843, he married Martha, seventh child of Benjamin and Lucinda (Bourne) Bourne, of Monument. Her father, born June 1, 1784, was a representative from the town for many years, and died December 1, 1863, at the age of seventy-nine years. My mother was seventh in line from Richard Bourne,<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>During the long reach from Scraggy Neck to Chapoquoit Harbor, a well-informed companion talks of the Indians who once lived on these shores, and whose soft language is heard in the names of numberless localities. They belonged to the Mashpee tribe, whose few

who was born in England and settled in Sandwich, acquiring the Indian language as far back as 1658. He was ordained pastor of the Indian church at Mashpee, August 17, 1670, by the missionaries John Eliot and John Cotton of Plymouth. He died at Sandwich in 1682, leaving four children, the sons of his first wife, Bethsheba Hallet, from the eldest of whom, Job of Sandwich, the line descended in primogeniture through son and grandson, both named Timothy, to Benjamin, (1744-1827), who graduated from Harvard College in 1764, and became a physician of

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survivors still live in the town of that name, some ten miles to the east. To them went, in 1658, an earnest missionary, Richard Bourne, a companion of John Eliot, the apostle to the Indians. He had gathered at Mashpee by 1670 a church of Christian Indians which has lasted to this day. The town of Bourne, along whose border we have just passed is named for Jonathan Bourne, a descendant of Richard. The Cape Indians were kept at peace with the whites during King Philip's war by the labors of the Christian ministers among them,—Bourne at Mashpee, Treat at Eastham, Thornton at Yarmouth, Tupper at Sandwich, and the Mayhews, father and son, at Martha's Vineyard. Safe at home, the Cape colonists sent forces to the aid of their fellows. Had the numerous tribes of the Cape first massacred the few English there, and joined King Philip, who can say but the result would have been the extermination of the outnumbered Europeans? It was the missionaries as well as the soldiers who saved New England!"—[Edwin Fiske Kimball. *New England Magazine*, September, 1892.

wide repute in Sandwich and likewise well known as a scholar. His eldest child, Benjamin, was the father of ten children, of whom my mother, Martha, born July 14, 1822, was the seventh.

The young married couple lived happy and uneventful lives at Sandwich. My father confined himself very closely to his practice, occasionally, however, taking a short trip to Boston, attending the annual meetings of the Massachusetts Medical Society when possible. In addition to his practice he was officially interested in all educational matters pertaining to the town.

In January, 1846, he was summoned to Boston on account of the dangerous illness of his brother, whom he found suffering from pleuro-pneumonia of a typhoidal type which terminated fatally in a few days.

I cannot do better than to quote from a sketch of my uncle's life in the History of Bowdoin College, by Nehemiah Cleaveland, edited and compiled by Alpheus Spring Packard:

"Joseph C. Ayer was the son of Dr. James Ayer of Newfield. He was a modest youth, fond of innocent sport, genial and obliging in disposition, and faithful in his friendships. \* \* \* \* \* His medical studies begun with his father, were completed in Boston, where

soon after he married and settled. 'He was fond of medical inquiry in all its departments, but especially so of anatomy and surgery. Ever attentive to the calls of his profession and the impulses of humanity, not only his professional skill but his warmest sympathies were enlisted in behalf of his patients.' Dr. Ayer was not merely a medical man, he soon became known as an enlightened and public-spirited citizen, and his services as such were claimed. 'He held various honorable offices in the gift of the city and discharged their duties with energy and fidelity.' The year before he died he was one of the aldermen of Boston. \* \* \* \* \* His remains lie near the tomb of the Mathers in the ancient burial-ground on Copp's Hill."

He graduated at the Harvard Medical School in 1836, joining the Massachusetts Medical Society the same year.

## LIFE IN BOSTON.

1846-1860. "

Immediately after the death of his brother my father removed to Boston, boarding at first at 204 Hanover street between Prince and North Bennet streets; six months later taking with Reverend Phineas Stowe, the well known Bethel pastor, a new house at the corner of Prince and Hanover streets. He remained in this interesting neighborhood, which is historically associated with the Mathers, Governor Hutchinson, Sir Henry Frankland and Paul Revere, during his fifteen years' residence in the northern part of the city.

When he came to Boston Doctors Ephraim Buck and Henry G. Clark were his nearest professional neighbors. The medical centre was at that time in the neighborhood of Summer street. Boston then contained about one hundred and fifteen thousand inhabitants. The Back Bay flowed to the westerly side of Charles street. Tremont street from the Boston & Albany railroad bridge to

Northampton street had not as yet been laid out as a public thoroughfare. Little had been done at this time in building up the South End.

The suburbs were connected with the city by lines of omnibuses. "Hourlies" ran to Cambridge and Charlestown, three trips daily were made to Jamaica Plain and Brighton.

My father became an active physician from the start. Although the fees were small, one dollar and frequently but fifty cents being received for a professional visit, yet he was astonished by his success. Many of his brother's patients continued with him, and he began his forty-one years of active city practice with a zeal which never abated.

As the tide of population carried his patients to the newer parts of the city and to the suburbs he had an excellent opportunity in his long daily drives to watch the progress of the city's growth. While the Back Bay was being filled in he was constantly reminded as he sought out the unfinished streets in making his long rounds, of the sandy drives he had been in the habit of taking on Cape Cod.

His interest in schools continued. In 1847 and 1848 he was a member of the Boston school committee.



He early became a regular attendant at the Salem street church under the ministration of the Reverend Dr. Edward Beecher,<sup>1</sup> and thereto transferred his membership in 1848 from the Congregational Church in Lebanon, Maine. He was closely identified with all the interests of the church during the pastorates of Dr. Beecher and of his successor, Reverend Dr. George W. Field, who was there installed as minister in October, 1856, and now resides in Bangor, Maine.

The severe epidemic of Asiatic cholera in 1849 found favorable circumstances for development in the narrow streets and lanes of the old part of the city, and kept him especially busy during the whole summer. He noted that the intemperate generally succumbed to the disease, and that as a rule the crisis was reached and the case decided in twenty-four hours. He saw a great many cases of cholera in the epidemic of 1854, though as a rule they were less severe.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Reverend Dr. Edward Beecher, the oldest surviving member of the Beecher family, entered upon his ninetieth year yesterday. He is one of six sons, and a brother of Henry Ward Beecher. He is spending a serene old age in Brooklyn, after fifty years of active life as preacher, teacher, editor, college president and author.—[Boston Evening Transcript, August 29, 1892.]

<sup>2</sup> He reported two deaths from cholera in the light epidemic which occurred in 1866.

He was a Consulting Physician<sup>1</sup> of the city of Boston, annually re-elected from 1854 to 1860 inclusive. Questions connected with contagious disease were always of special interest to him. In April, 1858, he attended the quarantine convention in Baltimore as a delegate, and one year later the convention in New York.

He was first chosen a councillor of the Massachusetts Medical Society<sup>2</sup> in May, 1851, and was re-elected thirty-eight successive years.

Three years after his removal to Boston, January 6, 1849, the first child, James Bourne Ayer, was born, and

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<sup>1</sup> The consulting physicians during his term of service were :

1854, (election May 11,) Drs. John C. Warren, Jacob Bigelow, George Hayward, Zabdiel B. Adams, James Ayer.

1855, Drs. John C. Warren (died May 4, 1856), Jacob Bigelow, George Hayward, James Ayer, D. McBean Thaxter, Jr.

1856-1860, Drs. Jacob Bigelow, George Hayward, James Ayer, John Jeffries, D. H. Storer.

<sup>2</sup> The list of councillors of the Massachusetts Medical Society, Suffolk District Branch, in 1851 was as follows : Drs. J. Ware, J. Bigelow, Z. B. Adams, S. D. Townsend, J. Homans, G. Hayward, E. Reynolds, J. Jeffries, D. H. Storer, S. Morrill, A. A. Watson, M. S. Perry, D. Harwood, A. A. Gould, H. Dyer, C. H. Stedman, G. Bartlett, J. Odin, Jr., N. B. Shurleff, C. Gordon, H. I. Bowditch, H. G. Clark, Charles Chase, G. A. Bethune, C. E. Ware, J. Ayer, J. A. Stevens, W. T. Parker, E. H. Clarke.



FIG. 1. CORNEAL LENS.

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MARTHA BOURNE AYER AND SON.



November 18, 1850, another son, Frederick Bourne Ayer, who died January 20, 1853.

The beloved wife and mother survived the death of this son less than three years. She died September 29, 1855, in the thirty-fourth year of her age, and was buried at Mount Auburn. I was old enough to recognize her lovely character, and in some slight measure to be conscious of the great loss which had fallen upon the family. In referring to her I quote from a tribute to her memory in *The Congregationalist*, October 19, 1855 :

\* \* \* “ In a family circle of ten children, all arrived at adult age, this was the first link broken from the social chain. Throughout her sickness, alike exhausting to flesh and spirits, her mental vigor remained unimpaired ; and her patience proved equal to the exactions of remorseless disease. \* \* \*

“ Possessed of cheerful disposition and great amiability of character, she ever studied the happiness of her family and those around her. Deeply conscientious, her regard for truth was most scrupulous. Faithful in attachments, winning in manners, though retiring — a large circle of friends were strongly attached to her.

“ In the winter of 1852, during the revival season in this city, her attention was specially directed to the sub-

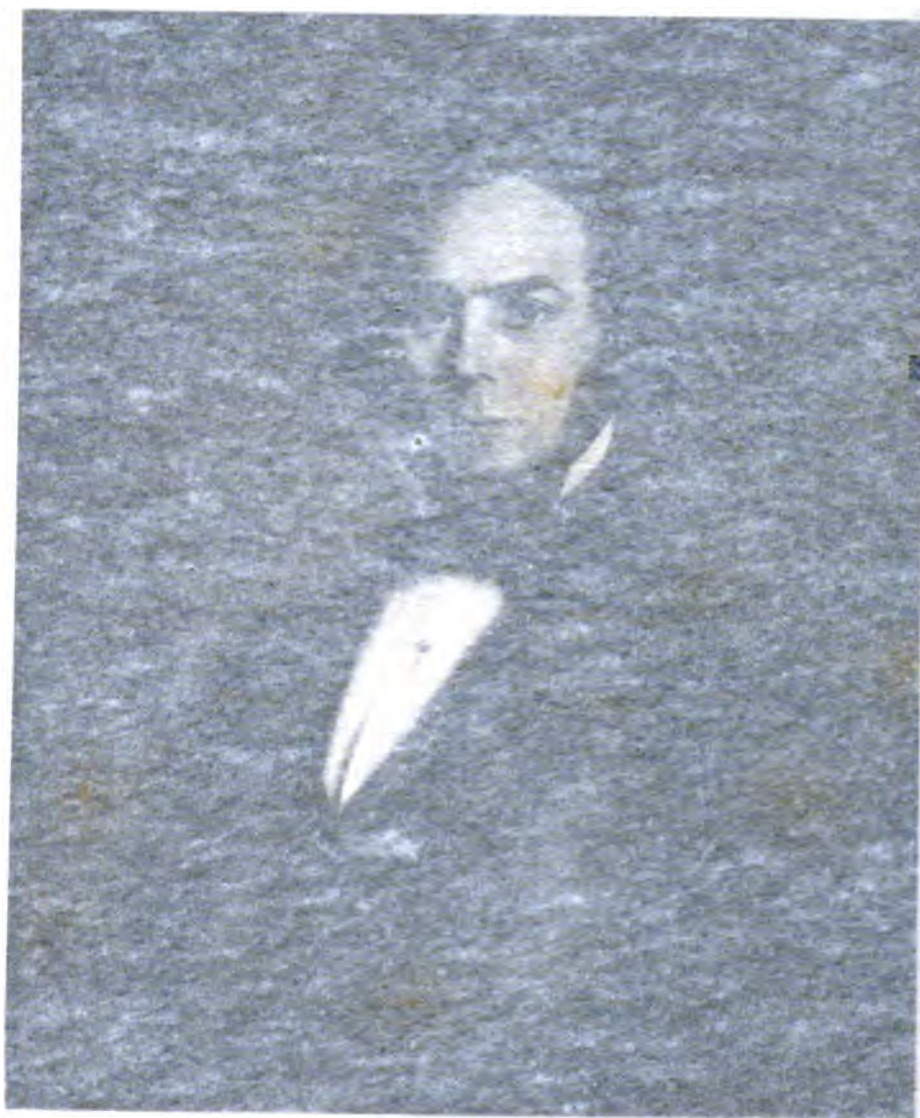
ject of personal religion. These convictions resulted in the indulgence of a Christian hope; after careful self-examination she united with Reverend Dr. Beecher's church in July following. The consolations of religion sustained her in the trying hours of sickness. \* \* \*

"In all the relations of life she was eminently faithful and exemplary; unobtrusive in manner, her merits were fully appreciated only by that immediate circle of friends whose position enabled them to know her worth. As a wife, firmly attached to the objects of an undying love; as a daughter and sister dutiful and affectionate; as a Christian, diligently studying her duty in the Word of God, and illustrating the sincerity of her professions by acts of kindness and benevolence.

"Her-death bed was marked by the calmness and hope derived from strong religious faith." \* \* \*

The fifteen years which my father spent at the North End were those of untiring work, as it was his rule never to refuse any summons by day or night. Many were the emergencies to which he was called—to ships in the harbor—to the police station in cases of sudden sickness, assaults and accidents, and very frequently was he summoned into court as a medical witness. He was





JAMES AYER AT AGE OF 71

ject of personal religion. These convictions resulted in the belief, sure of a Christian hope; after careful self-examination she joined with Reverend Dr. Beecher's church in July following. The consolations of religion sustained her in the trying hours of sickness. \* \* \*

"In a long and laborious life she was eminently faithful and exemplary in her private as well as in her public life; her merits were fully appreciated, not only by the immediate circle of friends whose position enabled them to know her worth. As a wife, deeply attached to the objects of an undying love; as a daughter and sister dutiful and affectionate; as a Christian, diligently studying her duty in the Word of God, and cherishing the sincerity of her professions by the purity of her life and the goodness of her conduct." \* \* \*

"Her death was marked by the calmness and resignation of one whose religious faith." \* \* \*

The first ten years of his father's life my father spent at the North and were of a busy and arduous nature, as it was his rule never to refuse any summons by day or night. Many were the emergencies to which he was called—to ships in the harbor, to the police station in cases of sudden sickness, assaults and accidents, and very frequently was he summoned into court as a medical witness. He was



JAMES AYER AT AGE OF THIRTY-NINE.



liable to be called out of bed every night in the week, but owing to his natural strength and vigor, his cheerful and even temperament, his methodical habit and fondness for work, he always appeared fresh by day and rarely gave evidence that he was overworked.

He had the "cheerful and serene countenance" on which Dr. Holmes lays so much stress. He was naturally optimistic and always looked out for favorable symptoms, no matter how discouraging the case. "Never cross a river until you come to it" was a favorite maxim with him. It was remarkable how easily he could himself throw off care, and how helpful the tendency to look upon the bright side proved to him in the practice of his profession.

Toward the end of his residence in this part of the city his friend and neighbor Dr. Ephraim Buck died on January 2, 1859.

## LIFE IN BOSTON.

1860-1877.

In the fall of 1860, following the drift of population, he removed to the West End, leasing the house, number 9 Staniford-street, for five years. Here he had the companionship of many congenial neighbors, among whom was Reverend Dr. Edward N. Kirk, whose intimate friendship he afterward enjoyed.

In 1864 he transferred his connection to Mount Vernon Church, continuing his membership till the death of Dr. Kirk, March 27, 1874, and through the rest of his life with Reverend Dr. Samuel E. Herrick, who was equally valued as friend and pastor. Here he was as active a member as he had been at Salem Street church. For many years he was treasurer of the society.

During the War of the Rebellion he was deeply interested in the Discharged Soldiers' Home, serving as Visiting Physician from the time of its establishment, July 4, 1862, till September 18, 1863, and continuing during the following seven years as a member of the executive committee. Dr. Richard M. Hodges was the

Consulting Surgeon. Dr. Leonard R. Sheldon was associated with my father during the latter part of his service, and continued as Visiting Physician several years with Dr. John A. Lamson who succeeded my father. Dr. Arthur H. Nichols was the House Surgeon during my father's service.

The Home was established through the efforts of Reverend Phineas Stowe of the Seamen's Bethel.<sup>1</sup> At first it was located in a large warehouse, the free use of which had been granted by a benevolent merchant. July 4, 1862, the building which had been occupied by the Lying-in Hospital a few years previously on West Springfield street was dedicated to the use of the Home. The first annual report states: "The value and extent of the gratuitous services of the attendant physicians kindly volunteered by them, may be inferred from the fact that forty persons have at one time been under regular and immediate medical treatment, while nearly the whole number of inmates have required more or less professional advice and care."

In 1863 my father, with other Boston physicians, visited the hospitals in the District of Columbia, in behalf of the United States Sanitary Commission.

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<sup>1</sup> Daniel Denny, Esquire.

May 18, 1864, he became a trustee of the Boston Lying-in Hospital Corporation. At that time there was no hospital building, but a portion of the income was used for the benefit of appropriate patients who were in need. His interest in the hospital after the buildings were purchased in McLean street, in 1873, steadily increased as time went on. For twenty-three years he was trustee and in 1887 was elected vice-president.

July 15, 1862, he married Mrs. Mary Ann (Bourne) Storms, sister of Martha his first wife. A western trip was taken at that time. She survives him residing in Boston.

In the fall of 1865 he purchased house number 6 Hancock street, formerly occupied by Dr. Francis H. Gray. Here he resided twelve years.

During the seventeen years spent at the West End, he was uninterruptedly occupied in professional work. Before he came to Boston, he had a large midwifery practice which engrossed so much of his time as almost to be considered a specialty with him. In the spring of 1879, he read a paper before the Suffolk District Medical Society, reporting his experience in this department, under the title "A partial review of two thousand cases of midwifery."



He was able to make a large number of vaccinations every year, and rarely failed to have fresh vaccine matter on hand for the use of his medical friends, as well as for his own needs. I recall that a large portion of my leisure time in boyhood was spent in carefully cutting out and scraping "points" from goose quills, for use in vaccination. Quill points and humanized vaccine, like many other medical customs which my father outlived, have had their day, but they have done praiseworthy service.

In 1872, while small-pox was raging in Boston, his time was in great measure occupied in vaccinating. This was the busiest year of his life.

During the period in which he resided at the West End, he was active in attendance upon the meetings of the various medical societies with which he was connected. He was a member of the Committee on Membership and Resignations of the Massachusetts Medical Society from 1859 to 1885, and was for many years the chairman. He was interested in the Suffolk District Medical Society from its organization in 1849, and was at one time Chairman of the Committee on Social Meetings. He served as vice-president of the District Society in 1866 and 1867. He was chosen a member of the

Boston Society for Medical Improvement in 1857, and was, during the following thirty years as constant in attendance upon its meetings as his engagements would permit. He was a member, and at times an officer, of the Boston Obstetrical Society between 1864 and 1873.

He was one of the original members of the Medical Benevolent Society, and served as a trustee.

His acquaintance in the medical profession was exceptionally wide. Himself a type of the general practitioner of medicine before the era of specialties, he was not only well known to most of the neighboring physicians in private practice, but equally so to those of his profession, who held hospital appointments.

## LIFE IN BOSTON.

1877-1887.

Grow old along with me !  
The best is yet to be,  
The last of life for which the first was made.  
Our times are in His hand  
Who saith, "A whole I planned."  
Youth shows but half ; trust God :  
See all, nor be afraid !

— ROBERT BROWNING.

When I returned from Europe and began the practice of medicine in 1875, my father began to look forward to a partial relaxation from work, and in the spring of 1877, shortly after my marriage with Mary Eliza Farwell, daughter of the late Honorable Nathaniel W. Farwell, of Lewiston, Maine, he removed to number 135 Boylston street, in the neighborhood of Boston's medical centre, leaving to us the house on Hancock street.

In May of the following year he took his first long vacation, spending with his wife six months in Europe. He was not less methodical in travel than in work,

as he never failed each night while away to make a daily record of the sights which had interested him. A charming month of this delightful trip was spent in Thun, Switzerland, which, proved to be a good halting place in the middle of summer, and a convenient head-quarters for the numerous Alpine trips which they made in every direction.

Returning home from a well-earned rest, as well as delightful vacation, he resumed practice, less actively, however, than in previous years.

Reading had always been to him a favorite pastime. He subscribed to a Medical Journal Club twenty years, and I venture to say no member read the periodicals more faithfully. As time went on his zest for books increased, not only for works pertaining to his profession but for general literature, especially biography and travel. Literature connected with old Boston, such subjects as now receive attention from the Bostonian Society of which he was a member, proved of unfailing interest to him. He likewise began to enjoy the benefits of the newly formed Medical Library, now in Boylston Place. He possessed a good working medical library, steadily adding to his collection the most recent of the practical works as they were published. He did not,

however, discard all of his earlier guides, and sometimes referred, even in the latest years of his practice, to such works as Watson's Practice of Physic, Dewees' System of Midwifery, Dewees on Children, and Copland's Medical Dictionary.

As he grew older there was no radical change in his views regarding treatment by medicine. When it had been the fashion to use calomel and other drugs to excess, and to employ venesection freely, he had always been conservative in his methods, and was never an advocate of heroic treatment. He was no skeptic, however, regarding the value of those medicines which he had used by the bedside and had found trustworthy, and as was the case with his old books, he frequently resorted to the old-fashioned drugs up to the last years of his practice, although he was not averse to the employment of new remedies when he considered that their efficacy had been established.

He was a vigorous opponent of shams in medicine, no matter in what form they appeared. He was always loyal to the highest welfare of his profession. He appreciated the benefit to the profession from the rapid strides made by specialties and welcomed all advances which tended to make the science of medicine more

practical, often quoting Doctor Holmes: "Science is a good piece of furniture for a man to have in an upper chamber provided he has common sense on the ground floor."

As time went on he became more inclined to keep records of his interesting cases. The last article of any length which I find is an address on "Medical Nursing" delivered before the nurses of the Boston Lying-in Hospital.

He was helpful to younger medical men. It was rare for him not to be able to assist them by recalling some interesting case from his rich experience to illustrate the subject under discussion. He was a good guide for he was never impulsive, though he never shirked his full duty. "Let your moderation be known to all men," was his most frequent quotation.

People had confidence in him, many wrote to him for advice upon subjects not strictly of a medical nature. He was always willing to give the best advice he could, and he never forfeited anyone's confidence. "I will trust your prudence and judgment anywhere," was said to him on an important occasion by a friend who knew him intimately.

In May, 1882, he removed to Hotel Pelham. He con-

tinued to see his former patients and was often called in consultation. He began to take longer vacations, and to enjoy a life which in former times he would have considered too quiet. He devoted more time to meetings of a social character, rarely omitting a gathering of the Congregational Club. Church services were, as they had been through life, a delight, and his attendance was not confined to one day in the week.

He was interested in all good causes, and was a benevolent giver. Nothing in his history has impressed me more than his fortunate association during his whole life with so many of the best of men.

In July, 1884, he attended the semi-centennial celebration of his graduation from Bowdoin College, at Brunswick, and keenly enjoyed the meeting, ten of the fifteen surviving members of his class being present.

In May, 1885, he visited Newfield to attend the funeral of his eldest sister, Mrs. Ham. The second sister, Mrs. Burbank, died December 14, 1889, when he was too feeble to take the journey to Newfield. Both sisters are buried near their parents in the village burial-ground.

## LAST YEARS.

1887-1891.

The Fall of 1887 found him engrossed in professional and other duties. Shortly after this time he had an acute illness, with indefinite symptoms, from which he seemed at first to improve, but it was soon evident to his family that he would never be able to resume the duties of professional life.

Fortunately, he was always hopeful about himself and always looked forward to the time when it might be possible to take up again a portion, at least, of his cares.

Save that idleness, as he called it, was often irksome after so busy a life, his days passed in comfort, for he suffered no pain, and found much enjoyment in his daily drives, in the companionship of his family, and of the little grandchildren, and in his much-loved books of which he never tired.

Two years before he died, he declined on account of his feeble state of health, a renomination as vice-president of the Boston Lying-in Hospital, to which he had



been twice re-elected, but he remained a member of the corporation, and was interested in its welfare up to the time of his death. At the annual meeting of the corporation held January 15, 1890, a vote of thanks was passed to the retiring vice-president, for the services he had rendered the hospital.

As a patient throughout his long illness, his natural traits of kindness and thoughtfulness for others remained prominent, and it was a pleasure to do for him. The nurses, who were summoned in different phases of his illness, all became attached to him and loved to minister to his necessities.

He passed the summer of 1891 in Bourne, where he had lived fifty years before. He returned to the city in the middle of September, apparently improved in health.

He now took a suite of rooms in the Hotel Oxford, and seemed to have much of life and enjoyment before him, when, December 20, he was suddenly seized with symptoms of epidemic influenza which was then raging in the city. During the first few days of the attack it was thought that he might have sufficient strength to throw off the disease, as he had successfully and quickly done the preceding year, but in spite of every care pneumonia appeared. On the tenth day of his illness he became

unconscious and death followed at sunset, the last day of the year.

The funeral took place from his pleasant home January 3, 1892, the services being conducted by Reverend Samuel E. Herrick, his pastor, assisted by Reverend Cyrus Hamlin, a class-mate and life-long friend, both of whom made feeling and appropriate remarks. The services were impressive, and their effect was heightened by the touching manner in which favorite hymns were rendered by a quartette under the direction of Mr. Clarence E. Hay. Many professional brethren, friends, and former patients were present. The bereaved wife had suffered severely from epidemic influenza in the course of the two preceding years, and during his final sickness she herself was very ill. She was prostrated at the time of his death and was scarcely able to sit up in bed during the funeral services.

He was buried in the family lot at Mount Auburn.

He passed away at the age of seventy-six years, two months and twenty-seven days, having accomplished more work than it is given to the majority of men to do.

Among the many interesting clippings in his note books I find the following rules, attributed to Baron Rothschild:

Attend carefully to the details of your business.  
Be prompt in all things.  
Endure trials patiently.  
Fight life's battle bravely, manfully.  
Hold integrity sacred.  
Injure not another's reputation or business.  
Join hands only with the virtuous.  
Keep your mind from evil thoughts.  
Lie not for any consideration.  
Never try to appear what you are not.  
Observe good manners.  
Pay your debts promptly.  
Question not the veracity of a friend.  
Be moderate in appetite.  
Extend to everyone a kindly salutation.  
Yield not to discouragements.  
Zealously labor for the right, and success is certain.

I feel that these rules find an appropriate place here being peculiarly in accord with his own life. His exact methods, punctuality and uniform courtesy, his industry in his preparatory studies and throughout a long, laborious, and responsible professional life, have been especially referred to in this sketch.

His integrity and rare good judgment, combined with his way of manfully overcoming obstacles and never yielding to discouragements, were at the foundation of his signally successful life.

How unassuming he was, how pure his life, how strong his reliance upon the Scriptures, how firm his Christian hope, I leave to the eloquent and touching words of loving friends—a class-mate and his pastor—in the following chapters.

Nothing can be more inspiring for a son than to review the life of a father who has left to his family the richest of all inheritances—an honored and lasting name.

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## In Memoriam.

DR. JAMES AYER.

In taking official notice of the death of Dr. James Ayer, the Boston Society for Medical Improvement desires to record its high estimate of one of its oldest members.

By his constant attendance at the meetings of the Society, and by the high standing of his professional and private character, he earned the respect and the esteem of the Society as well as of the community.

The secretary respectfully tenders to the family of Dr. Ayer its sympathy in their bereavement.

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## REMINISCENCES OF COLLEGE AND PROFESSIONAL LIFE.

BY REVEREND CYRUS HAMLIN, D.D., LL.D.

It is more than sixty years since I became acquainted with Dr. James Ayer whose remains were conveyed to Mt. Auburn last Sunday afternoon. He was my classmate in Bowdoin College, entering as sophomore in 1831.

Bowdoin College — and the same may be said of all colleges, was quite different then to what it is now. It must be so, for everything has changed. Our clothing has changed. Every tool we work with or use has changed. The surgeon looks with horror upon the instruments that were used seventy-five years ago, or even fifty. The students were from the families of farmers, traders, mechanics, and professional men. But almost every one had a bit of a farm, enough to keep a horse and a cow, and there was always a pig squealing about somewhere. Almost every man was something of a mechanic, something of a farmer.

Every boy knew how to drive a nail, which a boy does not know now. Life was full of labor and labor was full of life. There was not less ambition or less mental activity then than now. There was more rudeness, more rough hazing. There was a much severer economy and many students injured their health by low living, as many, perhaps, as now injure it by high living. It was the general practice of students to teach a district school in the long winter vacation of two months and if a student was fortunate enough to have a three month's school he was dealt with kindly with regard to making up his studies. My class-mate Ayer always taught school and with eminent success. Although very young he had a certain dignity which was perfectly natural to him, and a straightforwardness which impressed every one with a feeling that he knew what he was about.

Although he never put himself forward into anything, but was rather reserved, he had a genuine amiability which always won him friends. He joined the great majority of his class in firm opposition to all hazing. He was regular as a chronometer in his attention to all college duties. These were never light. The faculty of Bowdoin College were men of power. President Allen and Professors Cleaveland, Smyth, Upham, Newman, Pack-



ard, and Longfellow were all faithful, able, laborious men and they gave us enough to do and held us to it. They were an inspiration to all the students capable of estimating true nobility of character. There were students also whose future could be easily predicted and who exerted a great influence upon the college. Cyrus A. Bartol, W. H. Allen, President of Girard College, Daniel R. Goodwin, Samuel Harris, Henry B. Smith, with others pressing on, formed a center and source of intellectual and spiritual life. James Ayer did not aspire to be one of these leaders. But he felt and owned their influence. His genuine modesty sometimes kept him too much in the rear. But he had the respect of them all and the close friendship of some. He was devout in his religious duties. He pursued the even tenor of his way in such a manner that no one expected him to turn aside into any studential rivalries or animosities. He often lamented that he had entered without the thorough "fit" that some of the class had received, but he made it up by an iron diligence. He had a conscientious resolve to avoid no duty, to be absent from no college exercise when his presence was required. I question whether he ever had a mark against him on the college books. Such an example is of great value in a class. It is a reproof to those who shirk certain duties

because they cannot get any credit for doing them in the manner they will have to do them.

If a committee of three had been chosen at our graduation to select men destined to useful and successful lives, Ayer and his chum Jewett would have been readily and confidently placed in the number. He had the elements to ensure success in the profession he had chosen — that of medicine — calmness, consideration, a clear judgment and a firm will, together with a natural kindness and ready sympathy that made families love to trust him.

I became thoroughly acquainted with him as a physician on my return to this country in 1860-61, and still more from 1873 to his death. He might be called in every respect "the good physician." There was a conscientious determination to understand the case if it presented anything at all obscure. He would use no positive remedial measures until he felt sure that he was treading on safe ground. He was called to the case of a friend who had a crural swelling that might need attention. He had doubts with regard to it and its proper treatment, and called in an eminent specialist, who pronounced it a cancer and incapable of any remedy. Ayer would not yield to his decision, and the case was referred to others. There was great difference of opinion, and one

of the greatest of surgeons was made the final judge. He pronounced it a cancer, and operated upon it as such. It proved after all to be a fatty tumor and harmless. Dr. Ayer claimed no credit for the correct judgment to which he had adhered against the highest authorities, but it is a case illustrating his character. He followed that case with a personal interest and anxiety which had no financial motive whatever. He neither sought nor received nor expected the slightest reward. There was a genuine sympathy in every important case that made the patient feel that in the physician he had a faithful friend. Something of this is natural to the physician. His reputation is involved in the successful issue of the case, and he is alert for every means of alleviation. Dr. Ayer had all that, but he had more. He had a genuine sympathy with all the struggles of humanity. He had worked his own way up to eminent success through severe economy and persistent effort, and he had a kindly feeling toward all struggling humanity. He went to the poor as readily as to the rich, and some of his most difficult cases carried through with brilliant success were cases where no compensation could be given and where none was expected.

I look upon my classmate's life as one regular harmo-

nious growth and development during the sixty years that I knew him.

About a dozen of the class met at our semi-centennial. A magnificent dinner was given us by our classmate, the Hon. Peleg W. Chandler. Each one gave a brief account of his fifty years. No one was more modest and reserved than Ayer. But he frankly acknowledged that his success in life had been greater than his expectations. He had a profession to which he had always felt attached as honorable and useful, and God in His providence had so disposed of his changes in life that each had been a step in advance, and if he had not had the distinguished success of some of the class he felt that he had all and more than he merited. There had been great changes in the fifty years, but God had not changed. Christianity had not changed, and the truths which he received fifty years ago were still sufficient for him. He did not wish to launch out into any of the speculations of the present times. Some present had not met before since graduation. We visited the familiar places of fifty years ago; we recalled, sometimes with tender interest, sometimes with shouts of laughter, our college life. We separated with renewed respect and affection. Nearly half of those who there met in 1884 have passed over to the life

beyond. But no one has carried with him a better testimony of his associates and friends to a life well spent. We can pronounce upon him the Bible benedictions upon the good man, the just, the true, the benevolent, upon him who fears God and loves his fellow man.

CYRUS HAMLIN.

## FUNERAL ADDRESS.

BY REVEREND SAMUEL E. HERRICK, D.D., MINISTER OF  
MOUNT VERNON CHURCH.

Just about this time, twenty-one years ago, the name of Dr. James Ayer was appended to the call in response to which I became his minister and the pastor of Mount Vernon Church. Not long afterwards he became my family physician, and continued to be until he was compelled by failing health to resign his professional work. We were thus bound to each other for many years by a reciprocal attachment which, to me, at least, was the source of great comfort and delight. Our knowledge of each other was necessarily intimate, our communication frequent, our confidence affectionate and complete. I have such a right, and perhaps such ability, to speak of him as my physician and parishioner, as he would have had to speak of me as his minister and patient.

Dr. Ayer came nearer, I think, to fulfilling the ideal of a good physician than it is often given to men to come. He was naturally well endowed for his profession. He had a tender heart and a cool temper. He was prompt, not rash. Enthusiasm never ran away with his judgment. He would risk positively nothing for the sake of brilliancy. He was his patient's best friend and his patient knew it without any professions. The patient with him was always more than a "case." I doubt whether he ever read a heart's register through his finger tips that his own heart did not fall into sympathetic action.

His sympathy thus inspired affection, and his judgment confidence. He carried his best medicine in his own personality. His presence, his face, his voice, his manifest spirit, were sanative. He set up a healing power first of all in his patient's own spirit. Drugs with him were subsidiary. Health in its largest meaning was his prime object, the "*mens sana in corpore sano*." He began where possible with the "*mens*." Courage, hope, expectancy, determination—he established these as the basis of medical sanitation, so that the patient felt as soon as his doctor's fingers were upon his pulse, that the cure had begun. At the same time, he never made any large promises, there was no braggart pretence, no conceited

air of superiority, no pompous bustle, no display of professional knowledge or experience. He was as humble, modest and simple as a little child.

There was no perfunctoriness about him. His patience was inexhaustible. He would lay out his best skill and give as unstintedly of his time and his energy to a case of charity in some forlorn hovel, as though he knew golden guineas were at the end of his visit. His best honorarium was found in the gratitude and lasting friendship of his patients — and he was rich in these. There are multitudes, I am sure, in this city, who feel with me sorely bereft this day and whose blessings, if they could become visible, would hang like a cloud of benediction over this silent casket.

Fortunately it is within my power to speak as freely of his religious life as of his professional career. He identified himself with the Christian church at an early period, and the union was mutually an honor and a blessing to the very last. His modesty as a man, and his humility as a christian precluded any official ecclesiastical service. More than once during my pastorate in Mount Vernon Church he was urged to accept the diaconate. We felt that he was worthy in every way to be associated in a service which had been dignified by many noble men. But



he could not be prevailed upon. He was ever ready for a service, either of a spiritual or material kind. He could be counted upon at any time to render aid by personal ministry among the poor, or by generous gifts, or by his sympathetic word. He did not withhold his shoulder from the wheel. His piety was neither flighty on the one hand nor depressing upon the other. Neither in the religious and social meetings of the church nor in the business meetings of the parish was he content to be a cipher. He was peaceable and a peace-maker. His religious opinions were well settled and yet he was open to all light, and generous and large minded in his attitude to all of different ways of thinking.

Courtesy and charity were marked features of his bearing towards his fellow-men. In my long acquaintance with him I never saw him ruffled in his spirit or intemperate in his speech. He was without fail the Christian gentleman, and I think that his character would be accurately summed up in those words of St. James — "First pure, then peaceable; gentle and easy to be entreated; full of mercy and good fruits; without partiality and without hypocrisy."

His life viewed as a whole gives the impression of singular symmetry and completeness. It was well-rounded

and full. It presents no rugged or precipitous aspects. It has no chasms — no dead and desolate craters mar-  
ring its surface. It is smooth, uniformly gracious, peace-  
ful, garnished throughout with pleasant and harmonious  
growths of culture and of goodness. He has come to  
the garner of God as a shock of corn in his season, ful-  
ly ripe. Such seed means reproduction. It is dowered  
with "the powers of an endless life." The end is cer-  
tainly a new beginning. He has entered upon larger  
ministries — I shall see and know my "good physician"  
again.







